

Claim 32. Cancelled.

Claim 33 (Twice amended). The process of Claim 19 wherein the pulp is treated with the chelating agent during both the initial chlorine-containing bleaching stage and during the chlorine dioxide stage.

**REMARKS**

Claims 1 - 7, 10, 11, 13 - 17, 19 - 26, 29 - 37, 39 - 42, and 44 - 48 are in the case. Applicant previously appealed the final rejection of the claim in this case and filed his appeal brief on October 31, 2002. In view of this appeal brief, the Examiner has withdrawn all prior art rejections and has indicated that all pending claims are allowable except Claims 13 - 15 and 32 - 35, which have been rejected as allegedly being indefinite. These rejections are respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested in view of the accompanying amendments and comments.

In Claims 13 and 14, the Examiner contends that it is unclear if the "initial chlorination stage" corresponds to the "first chlorine dioxide-containing bleaching stage" in Claim 1. In response, Applicant has amended Claim 13 to delete any reference to the "initial chlorination stage" and to better emphasize the extraction stage, which is an additional required step in Claim 13. Claim 14 has been amended to recite a "first chlorine dioxide stage" rather than an "initial chlorination stage". The second chlorine dioxide stage has also been clearly labeled as such. In light of these amendments, it is submitted that the indefiniteness rejections of Claims 13 - 15 are overcome and that the same should be withdrawn.

As for Claims 32 - 35, the Examiner similarly contends that it is unclear if the "initial chlorination step" in Claim 32 corresponds to the "initial bleaching stage" in Claim 19 wherein the pulp is bleached with a "chlorine-containing compound". In response, Claim 32 has been cancelled and Claim 33 has been made to depend from Claim 19 rather than Claim 32. It is submitted that this overcomes the indefiniteness alleged by the Examiner.

In light of the foregoing, Applicant urges the Examiner to withdraw the rejections and to issue a notice of allowance at the earliest possible convenience.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned **"Version with markings to show changes made."**

In the event this response is not timely filed, Applicant hereby petitions for the appropriate extension of time and request that the fee for the extension along with any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper be charged to our **Deposit Account No. 12-2355**.

Respectfully submitted,

LUEDEKA, NEELY & GRAHAM, P.C.

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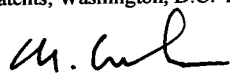
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Mark S. Graham, Reg. No. 32,355



Application No. 09/609,513

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

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**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 13 (Once amended). The method of Claim 1 wherein the bleaching operation further comprises [an initial chlorination stage,] an extraction stage [, and a peroxide stage].

Claim 14 (Once amended). The method of Claim 1 wherein the bleaching operation comprises [an initial chlorination] a first chlorine dioxide bleaching stage, an extraction stage, a second chlorine dioxide bleaching stage, and a peroxide stage.

Claim 32. Cancelled.

Claim 33 (Twice amended). The process of Claim [32 ] 19 wherein the pulp is treated with the chelating agent during both the initial chlorine-containing bleaching stage and during the chlorine dioxide stage.